OF

MOSES,

A LECTURE;

BY

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A LECTURE.

EXODUS, Chap. II. v. 1—11.

And there went a man of the houſe of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi; and the woman conceived, and bare a ſon, &c.

THIS is a remarkably beautiful and intereſting paſſage of the ſacred Scripture. It may be pleaſant and profitable to employ our thoughts a little upon it; and much the rather, that it ſeems to invite us to think of one who is "greater than "Moſes."

Pharaoh apprehending that the children of Iſrael were becoming too numerous, and that they would "get them up out of the land," charged

all his people, ſaying, "Every ſon that is born, "ye ſhall caſt into the river." God defeated his purpoſe, by employing his edict to be an inſtrument of training Moſes, even in his own family, to carry Iſrael out of Egypt. The circumſtances are here recorded.

We may witneſs the commencement of this remarkable event, by fancying ourſelves now ſitting upon an eminence near to the river Nile, and to Pharaoh's palace. What do we ſee? It is an Hebrew woman carrying an ark or baſket. Can it be her child? Doubtleſs! But ſhe hath not caſt it into the river; it is placed among the reeds. Lo! yonder is Pharaoh's daughter and her maidens coming towards the place; ſhe will obſerve the baſket. But,

We read here, what a company yonder might not at the time have known; both reſpecting the woman, and the child, and the baſket. Having bore a ſon,

When ſhe ſaw him that he was a goodly child, ſhe hid him three months.

Paul tells us, that "by faith Moſes was hid "three months *." She knew and believed, that "† the angel of the Lord called unto Abra-"ham out of heaven, and ſaid, By myſelf have I "ſworn, ſaith the Lord, for becauſe thou haſt "done this thing, and haſt not withheld thy ſon, "thine

* Heb. xi. 23. † Gen. xxii. 15.

" thine only ſon; that in bleſſing I will bleſs " thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy " ſeed, as the ſtars of the heaven, and as the " ſand which is upon the ſea-ſhore; and thy " ſeed ſhall poſſeſs the gate of his enemies; and " in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be " bleſſed; becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voice." And when ſhe ſaw him that he was a goodly child, having ſomething about him peculiarly amiable, ſhe hoped that God would proſper her endeavours to preſerve his life.

And when ſhe could not longer hide him, ſhe took for him an ark of bulruſhes, and daubed it with ſlime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and ſhe laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

And his ſiſter ſtood afar off, to wit what ſhould be done to him.

Diſtant from the ſtation of the ſiſter, we may preſume that the mother was not a great way; for, " Can a woman forget her ſucking child, " that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon " of her womb?" It is not to be doubted that ſhe had wiſely conſidered both the place and the time fitteſt for laying down her ſon.

The ſiſter was abundantly fit to watch; for ſhe was now of the age of twelve years, and the part ſhe acted ſhews how fit ſhe was.

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to waſh herſelf at the river, and her maidens walked along

along by the river's ſide; and when ſhe ſaw the ark among the flags, ſhe ſent her maid to fetch it.

And when ſhe had opened it, ſhe ſaw the child; and behold, the babe wept. And ſhe had compaſſion on him, and ſaid, This is one of the Hebrew children.

There appears to have been a number of maidens; one of them is diſtinguiſhed by the title of "her maid."

The ſight of the baſket and of the child was fit to excite compaſſion in behalf of the mother. But, "behold, the babe wept!" Here was a ſight fit to excite compaſſion even in Pharaoh's heart.

"And behold, the babe wept!" Alas, the helpleſs and miſerable eſtate of man! he comes into the world crying, and he uſually retires from it groaning. A babe may be viewed in weeping as though anticipating the evils of life: but the wailing of children is deſtined of God for them in love; it cauſeth thoſe that hear it to be attentive to them, and to have compaſſion on them.

Then ſaid his ſiſter to Pharaoh's daughter, ſhall I go and call to thee a nurſe of the Hebrew women, that ſhe may nurſe the child for thee?

It appears that the ſiſter had followed the baſket, "to wit what ſhould be done to him." She had a greater intereſt in his preſervation than ſhe was preſently ſenſible of; for in virtue of it, ſhe came to be endowed with the ſpirit of prophecy, and to have maidens in abundance to attend her;

for

for it is of her we read, * "And Miriam the "prophetess, the ſiſter of Aaron, took a timbrel "in her hand, and all the women went out after "her, with timbrels and with dances."

And Pharaoh's daughter ſaid unto her, Go: and the maid went, and called the child's mother.

The ſpirit with which the maid ſpake, ſhewed that it was not neceſſary to bid her go quickly. We are abundantly forward to comply with the will of God, when it correſponds with our wiſh. Her feet would be as hinds feet. The mother appeared inſtantly.

And Pharaoh's daughter ſaid unto her, Take this child away, and nurſe it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nurſed it.

She was content to have taken it without wages; but this is the manner of God; when he beſtows one favour, he accompanies it with another. When he gives a child, he accompanies it with milk, and generally with whatever elſe is needful. He is "full of compaſſion; he is rich "in mercy." When Hagar's bottle of water was ſpent, and ſhe wept for her child, "the angel of "God called to Hagar out of heaven, and ſaid "unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; "for God hath heard the voice of the lad where "he is. Ariſe, lift up the lad, and hold him in "thine

* Exod. xv. 20.

" thine hand; for I will make him a great na-
" tion. And God opened her eyes, and ſhe ſaw
" a well of water; and ſhe went, and filled the
" bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. He
" feedeth the young ravens when they cry *."

Had Pharaoh's daughter been ſo diſpoſed, ſhe might eaſily have diſcovered who theſe Hebrews were who had delayed three months to obey her father's charge to all his people, to caſt every ſon born unto the Hebrews into the river. The ſiſter's officiouſneſs, and the mother's countenance, might have led to the diſcovery: but ſhe aſked no queſtions; ſhe only ſaid, " Take this child a-
" way, and nurſe it for me." Charity and prudence are the beſt of all judges to determine when it is proper, and when it is not proper, to diſcover the circumſtances of events.

The mother would be happier in carrying the child home, than ſhe was in bringing him from home, to lay him in the flags by the river's brink. The virgin too would rejoice, both young and old together. The event would ſoon be publiſhed abroad, to the joy of all the Hebrews. " Jacob
" would rejoice, and Iſrael would be glad."

And the child grew, and ſhe brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her ſon. And ſhe called his name Moſes; and ſhe ſaid, becauſe I drew him out of the water.

" And

* Gen. xxi. 14.

"And he became her ſon." He was educated as ſuch, being made acquainted with all the learning of the Egyptians. Yea, ſhe treated him as her ſon, introduced him to the court of Egypt; and her brother having no children, ſhe would have him conſidered as her proper ſon, and acknowledged heir apparent to the kingdom *.

Thus the Hebrew child, that was found in a baſket, came to great honour; but higher honours than theſe awaited him; for, as Paul ſaith †, "By faith, when he was come to years, "he refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's "daughter; chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction "with the people of God, than to enjoy the "pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the re"proach of Chriſt greater riches than the trea"ſures of Egypt; and having a reſpect to the "recompenſe of reward."

Pharaoh's daughter ſeems in good humour to have ſpoken of him as a fiſh that ſhe had drawn out of the water. She gave him a name that commemorated the event. "She called his name "Moſes; and ſhe ſaid, becauſe I drew him out "of the water."

This piece of hiſtory is told with a beautiful ſimplicity, and, as founded upon Pharaoh's edict, hath nothing in it marvellous; the incidents hang together in the moſt natural connection. It ſhews

* Philo. † Heb. xi. 24.

how God employs natural means for accompliſhing his purpoſes.

There is in it what leads us, as in a pleaſant valley, to think of Jeſus. Moſes himſelf ſaid of him, that he was to be "a Prophet like unto him." He is like him, even in various particulars here mentioned.

Amram and Iſhebed, Moſes's parents, being of one tribe, even that of Levi, Moſes was made like unto his brethren, an Hebrew of the Hebrews. So Joſeph and Mary being of one tribe, even that of Judah, Jeſus "took not on him the na-"ture of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham."

As Moſes was hid by his parents in Egypt, becauſe of the wrath of Pharaoh, who ſought his life, ſo Jeſus was hid by his parents in Egypt from the wrath of Herod, who ſought his life. And,

As Moſes was put in a mean baſket, daubed with ſlime and with pitch, and laid in the flags, ſo Jeſus was meanly wrapped in ſwaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Further,

Moſes, attended by nobody but his ſiſter, afar off, may remind us of Jeſus upon the croſs, attended by no friend, excepting women who beheld him afar off.

When we think of Moſes weeping, we may think of Jeſus in the garden of Gethſemane, when he ſaid, "That his ſoul was exceeding ſor-"rowful, even unto death; and, when upon the "croſs,

" croſs, he cried with a loud voice, ſaying, " My " God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken " me?"

The baſket may likewiſe put us in remembrance of the ſepulchre; and his being lifted out from among the flags, and from the baſket, and returned to his mother and ſiſter, may lead us to think of our Lord's reſurrection from among the dead, and that, being raiſed, he was for a time reſtored to his diſciples, and converſed with them forty days, of the things pertaining to his kingdom.

When we conſider that Moſes, after being nurſed, was brought to Pharaoh's daughter, and became her ſon, and had a ſignificant name given him, we may view him as a type of our Lord Jeſus, who having been qualified by his ſufferings to be a Princely Saviour, was raiſed from the dead, and ſet at God's own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named; having a name given to him that is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow *. We truſt that he maketh interceſſion for us, and will bring us at length to our hoped for land.

This paſſage, thus tending to lead our thoughts to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is, of conſequence, pro-

 fitable

* Eph. i. 21. Phil. 2. 9.

ſitable for the purpoſes of godlineſs; for he came not merely to give himſelf for us, to redeem us from the guilt of our iniquities, but "to purify "unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good "works *."

Some who deal in the niceties of logical argumentation, may not be diſpoſed to trace the compariſon ſo far; yet thoſe who are truly devout, conſider not, neither do they regard ſuch things. And let not any deſpiſe them on this account; for it is the manner of men to ſacrifice all conſiderations to the gratification of their ruling paſſion. When Moſes was among the reeds, had mountains of gold been offered his mother, ſhe would not have accepted them inſtead of her ſon.

Moſes's mother is for our example, in the way wherein we ſhould exerciſe our faith. We ſhould truſt in God in circumſtances of the greateſt diſcouragement. Every thing appeared to be againſt her; ſhe was but a poor weak female; her huſband ſeems to have temporized; for there is no mention made of him: He ſeems to have been afraid of himſelf, becauſe the edict of the king was peremptory; it was plainly charged upon all his people; yet, ſhe "hoped againſt hope;" and ſhe exerted herſelf to the uttermoſt, both in concealing

* Tit. ii. 14.

cealing her ſon, and in daubing the baſket, and in ſetting Miriam to watch.

Let us do in like manner,—nor let us ſay that the ſucceſs of our endeavours is likely to prove unſucceſsful; for God brings ſtrange things to paſs. Little could it have been thought that God was to bring Iſrael out of Egypt under the ſtandard of Moſes his ſervant, when he lay ſprawling in the baſket: neither could it have been imagined that Jeſus was the Saviour of the world, and that his name was to become great among the Gentiles, when he hung upon the croſs as a malefactor. Though you lie among the pots, you may become the wings of a dove, covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold. "Who is among you that feareth the "LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, "that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? "let him truſt in the name of the LORD, and "ſtay upon his God *."

Times of extremity are often the times of God's opportunity. He may now be looking upon you, and about to ſend the angel of his preſence to comfort you. He can give you both the good you deſire, and with it more than you are looking for; both the child and the wages.

To conclude; The care and anxiety of Moſes's mother and of his ſiſter may remind us all of the

* Iſa. l. 10.

the care that hath been beſtowed upon us when we were infants, and lead us to be attentive to them that have cared for us; or if they are dead, to ſuch as are their repreſentatives on earth. "Have compaſſion one of another; be pitiful; be "courteous."

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